Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practice

Version:	**Date: November 2021**
Ratified by the Board of Trustees, Personnel Committee	
Signed by the Board of Trustees	**Date 29.11.21**
To be reviewed every 2 years	**Date 29.11.23**

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. As a high performing Trust, we have high expectations of our learners and staff. Appraisal and safeguarding procedures ensure that these standards are maintained. It is also important that staff adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

1.2. Further guidance on expectations can also be found in the Safeguarding Policy, the Acceptable Use of ICT (staff) policy and the Dress Code Policy. All staff should also read the 'Guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings 'document (July 2020) and Part 1 & annexe A of the 'Keeping children safe in education' document (DfE Sept 2020).

1.3. Both teaching and support staff at the Trust are expected to be role models for young people and for this reason all staff need to be consistent. The following guidelines make clear the expectations at the Trust and must be adhered to by all staff.

1.4. The guidance aims to:

- keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided

- assist adults working with children and vulnerable adults to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice

- support managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided

- support employers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken

- support safer recruitment practice

- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with students

- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

2. Attendance & Punctuality

2.1. Staff are expected to strive for 100% attendance and punctuality including INSET days, except for sickness, approved compassionate grounds, or where punctuality is concerned, unforeseen or circumstances outside of the individual's control. Staff absence is to be

notified on the first day of absence at the agreed time for each individual School. You should phone the main office for cover planning and need to call the same day to speak to the Office Manager/SLT member about the reason for absence. When returning from absence, you should notify the Academy at the agreed time to prevent unnecessary cover being employed. Holidays are to be taken as per the Trust's published term dates.

2.2.   All teaching staff are expected to be ready for work in their classroom, office or specialist area 10 minutes before pupils start. For other staff as per their contracted hours.

2.3.   All staff whose contracted hours permit should attend staff briefings on the agreed date/time. Teachers should also attend briefings. Staff need to be on time for changeover of lessons and all duties. Lateness can result in health and safety risks. Staff must inform the delegated member of staff in advance if they are going to be absent or late for their duty. Where possible they should arrange a swap with another colleague. All staff are required to use their card to sign in and out of the building at all times.

3.   Planning and Preparation

3.1.   Staff should ensure they are up to date with information and should check emails, MIS information and briefing notices daily to ensure they are aware of situations and events that will affect them. Teachers must ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time as it is a legal requirement (please refer to the guidance provided regularly by our Attendance Officer).

4.   Participation

4.1.   As in any organisations, the more staff put in the more they get out and therefore being engaged fully in all activities is an essential part of Academy life. In accordance with directed time staff are required to attend all relevant meetings including Parental Consultation evenings and/or Open Evenings. The Trust's appraisal policy clearly states that teaching staff are also expected to play their part in the wider professional life of the Trust. Support staff are also encouraged to participate fully in Trust life.

5.   Professionalism

5.1.   Staff are expected to behave professionally at all times. This includes both in and out of school. There are now explicitly stated expectations

of personal and professional conduct that make up Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards. Staff are also expected to:

- maintain professional boundaries with learners

- maintain professional relationship with colleagues

- respect the Trust's management and leadership structure

- use appropriate channels to raise concerns about learners or other staff (See detail in Safeguarding Policy)

- follow E-safety guidelines (see Acceptable Use of ICT Policy - Staff)

- take responsibility for accessing help and support should it be needed

- meet the requirements as specified by relevant examination bodies

- avoid actions which undermine the Trust, staff, learners or parents (this includes outside the workplace)

- follow the published procedures for dealing with all matters relating to

- use and maintain the Trust's resources sensibly (financial resources included)

- support the Trust ethos of not wasting resources (financial resources included)

- we strongly recommend that all staff become a member of a Professional Association.

6. Positive Touch

6.1. There are occasions when staff may have cause to have physical contact with learners for a variety of reasons. For further guidance on this please refer to the Trust's Touch Policy and the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention for all Staff working with Children & Young People.

7. Safeguarding

7.1. Staff are required to read the Safeguarding Policy and follow the guidance outlined in the various update through emails or Insets. Safeguarding training is provided to staff every September. Staff are also required to read Part 1 and Annexe A of the DfE document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

7.2. All staff are required to undergo safeguarding training every year.

7.3. All staff have a duty of care to keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Learners have the right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should understand their responsibilities and always act in the learner's best interests. They should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intervention.

8. Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share any concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others

- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns

- Empowering staff to self-refer any situation which may cause concern. For example, where a situation may be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, or where they may have behaved in such a way that could be considered below the expected professional standards

- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage

- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised

- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

9. Social Contact with Learners

9.1. All social contact outside of school hours with learners should be avoided. Home or mobile phone numbers; addresses or email addresses should not be exchanged. Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with learners for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between learners and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts will be easily recognised and openly

acknowledged. Nevertheless, there must be awareness on the part of those working with learners that some social contacts can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process.

10. Equality

10.1. Professional standards should always be maintained when dealing with both staff and learners regardless of culture disability, gender, language, race, religion and/or sexual identity. You must treat all children equally and with respect.

11. Confidentiality

11.1. Staff are expected to treat any information they may receive about learners in a discreet and confidential manner. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a learner or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the learners. Individual learners should never be discussed by staff in front of other learners. Staff should make it clear to learners that any disclosures implying threats to the welfare or safety of the learner, cannot be kept confidential, and may need to be discussed with an appropriate adult. Any learner's data held by staff must be kept secure and can only be shared under clear guidance. All staff need to respect the Data Protection Act 1998.

12. Photography and Videos

12.1. Staff should be clear about the purpose of recording images and about what will happen to them once the activity is concluded. Informed written consent from parent/carers is sought and those learners whose images cannot be used are recorded on the academy's database (pupils photograph permission). Staff have the responsibility to check the pupils photograph permission database before sharing pictures/videos with anyone.

13. Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

13.1. Staff should ensure that the motivation behind the giving of gifts/awards or rewards is clear to all learners in order to avoid any misunderstandings of intent. You must not give children gifts personally. Any appropriate gifts should come from the Academy as an organisation. The giving of gifts or rewards to learners should be part of an agreed strategy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. Staff must not accept gifts from children unless they are small token gifts appropriate to a celebration. All gifts must be reported to your Head of

Department. The Trust policy on gifts and hospitality must always be adhered to.

14. Educational Visits and After-School Activities

14.1. Organisers must conduct risk assessments and adhere to Health and Safety guidelines. Staff/pupil ratios should be considered and where overnight stays are involved, the gender mix should be carefully organised. No learners of the opposite sex should be allowed to enter the bedroom area of another learner. On residential trips staff must not smoke and no alcohol should be consumed. All visits and trips have to be approved by the Academy's EVC and need to have a direct contact number to the DSL.

15. Power and Positions of Trust

15.1. All staff working in school are in positions of trust in relation to the learners in their care. Relationships between adult and learners are not relationships between equals. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

16. Day-to-day Dealings with Learners

16.1. In day-to-day dealings with learners, all staff must be careful to avoid putting themselves at risk. The following are examples:

- Staff should work in an open environment where possible. If staff are in a one to one meeting or interview with a learner, they should keep the door open where possible or ensure that there is clear visual access.

If a learner is to be searched, a member of staff of the same sex as the learner should do this in the presence of a senior member of staff in SLT in compliance with the DFE guidance: Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Staff should maintain a professional distance with learners and should not allow learners to become over familiar.

- Staff are not allowed to communicate with learners on social network sites other than those approved by the Trust. No 'friending', 'linking', 'joining' or 'following' must take place until a learner is over 18 and no longer on roll as a learner at the Academy.

- It is an offence to have a sexual relationship with any learner up to the age of 18 and will be seen as a serious breach of conduct leading to dismissal, and even though technically legal beyond 18, such a relationship may well be viewed as a serious breach of professional trust.

- Staff should avoid confrontation with learners and always try to diffuse the situation. They should not shout in order to humiliate a learner but should be firm and calm. Staff should be careful to criticise the behaviour rather than the learner.

- Private tutoring should not be carried out on the Academy premises. It is also recommended that staff who privately tutor learners should inform the Principal/Headteacher of the names of any learners who are on roll at the Academy in case there are any pertinent issues of which they need to be aware.

- Staff who are examiners should not mark papers on the Academy premises.

- Staff should never photograph or film learners using their personal devices or mobile phones. School cameras must be used on all school trips.

- Staff should never give out their personal contact details to learners or parents. School mobiles should be used to contact parents during trips and Emergency contact numbers should be school mobile numbers only.

- If, in exceptional circumstances, staff are required to drive a learner in their car, they must:

a) ensure that their insurance covers them for business use

b) obtain parental permission in written form if possible

c) take at least one other member of staff.

d) keep conversation professional

e) seat learners in the back of the car where possible

17. Presentation

17.1. How staff present themselves, their appearance, body language, actions and use of language sets an example to the learners. We have high expectations of staff and for this reason request that staff, when in front of the learners should not:

- chew gum

- use mobile phones for personal use (unless essential but must use the staff room or SMT/SLT offices) or use their mobile phones in corridors

- expose tattoos or body piercings (except earrings)

- use inappropriate language in either oral or written form

- eat or drink in the corridors.

17.2. As a rule of thumb, staff are expected to dress in a professional and appropriate way. All staff should be fully aware of the Dress Code Policy. Staff need to be aware that issues relating to Professional Standards could prompt implementation of the Disciplinary and Capability policy.

17.3. Staff must ensure they wear their name badge at all times.

18. Whistle Blowing

18.1. Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice any serious concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The Trust has a clear and accessible whistle blowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. In accordance with the Trust's Whistle Blowing Policy, staff should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern to either the Head teacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Directors, as appropriate.

19. Social Media

19.1. The Trust is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The two with the widest use are Facebook, Twitter and more.

19.2. The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

19.3. This guidance and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

19.4. The guidance requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

19.5. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure:

- that the school is not exposed to legal risks

- that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected

- that our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

19.6. This guidance covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Directors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity.

19.7. The requirements of this guidance apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the Trust's representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

19.8. Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- blogs, for example Blogger

- online discussion forums, such as netmums.com

- collaborative spaces, such as Facebook

- media sharing services, for example YouTube

- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter

19.9. All the Trust representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

19.10. Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher.

19.11. All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher or a member of the SLT first.

19.12. Trust representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

19.13. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Thrive Education Partnership expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

19.14. Terms of Use

19.14.1. Social Networking applications:

- must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute

- must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns

- must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner

- must not be used for actions that would put Trust representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff

- must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies

- must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents

- no staff member should have a pupil or former pupil as a 'friend' to share information with

- employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school

- references should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head Teacher

- staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action

- violation of this guidance will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment

- guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- no member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites

- no member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites.

a) this means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend

b) where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment

- it is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child

- if you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school

- guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

- pupil's should only be accessing social networking sites they are old enough to do so

- no pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day

- no pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens

- no school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day unless for direct school use (posting school information of the school Facebook page)

- any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision

- please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the DSL in confidence as soon as it happens

- we have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

20.   Complimentary Policies

20.1.   This Policy must be read in conjunction with the following Trust Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy/Child Protection Policy

- Whole School Behaviour Policy

- Bullying Policy

- Health and Safety Policy

- Whistle blowing Policy

- Gifts and hospitality policy

- Data protection policy

21.   Changes

Description	Date	Page	Section
Low level concern	22.10.2021	6	8